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SIPDIS

AF/S BRIAN WALCH

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [PGOV](#) [RS](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA HAS NO INFORMATION ON ZIMBABWEAN BANK NOTES

REF: A. STATE 103129
[¶](#)B. STATE 103392

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel demarches on October 2 to MFA Africa Counselor Andrei Stolyarov, who said that the GOR did not have any information regarding a report that either a Russian company or individuals had contracted with a Zimbabwean company to produce Zimbabwean bank notes. This did not mean that the report was inaccurate, as Russians could be involved without the GOR's knowledge. Stolyarov explained that the Zimbabwean Ambassador to Russia is very active and travels regularly throughout the country, providing ample opportunity to "quietly" find an appropriate Russian company to assist with printing Zimbabwean bank notes. Should a Russian company be involved, neither the Zimbabweans, nor the Russians, would want this arrangement to become known considering that a German company previously engaged by the Zimbabweans was pressured into canceling its contract. Executives of such companies are "just crooks" interested in money for themselves, Stolyarov complained.

¶2. (C) Stolyarov told us that the GOR was taking a "wait and see" approach to the September 15 power sharing deal between Mugabe and Tsvangirai, which offered Zimbabwe its best chance to achieve some level of political stability. Stolyarov agreed that it was crucial for the government tackle the country's rampant inflation, the effects of which upon the Zimbabwean people he witnessed firsthand during his service in Harare. Russian energy and manufacturing companies were also watching the situation in Zimbabwe, which they saw as a potential market should the government succeed in stabilizing the economy.

BEYRLE